

Knowledge 3094

SECRET
Security Information

9 March 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Chronological History with Respect to Planning
for the Death of Stalin.

1. Official interest was manifested in this subject upon the publication of an article by a Mr. Scott called "Death In The Family", in January of 1951.

2. Mr. Phillips of the Department of State formulated an ad hoc interdepartmental group to study this problem and evolve some basic papers.

3. Two plans were prepared within the Agency in May of 1951 known as [] (subsequent to the death) and [] a crash plan for implementation on an emergency basis.

4. The committee reached a point where it felt that it needed a thorough-going intelligence annex prepared in Government, which would provide a basis and authority for the recommended actions.

5. On July 11, 1951, ONE was approached to include on its docket an intelligence estimate for this subject.

6. Since the docket was overcrowded, the ONE complex concurred that this could better be prepared outside of Government and accordingly [] took on the responsibility of preparing a paper on this subject.

7. On October 30, 1951, Mr. Gordon Gray of PSB requested Mr. Dulles' views as to whether formal planning should not proceed on this item. Mr. Dulles' reply indicated that it was the opinion of this Agency that sufficient intelligence was available to enable a continuing development of this subject, and he recommended that PSB be charged with steering this particular study.

8. A PSB panel of interdepartmental representatives was set up in which the CIA representatives were [] and []

SECRET
Security Information

SECRET
Security Information

25X1C

25X1C

9. This panel produced on April 16, 1952, a plan called [redacted]. This plan was circulated for comments in Government and was not well received within the Department of State. It was never formally submitted to the PSB. It included for background the previous thinking that had been prepared on [redacted], these plans having been made available to the panel for the drafting of [redacted].

25X1C

10. In the next 3 months, nothing definitive was accomplished on this matter.

25X1A

25X1A

11. On June 30, 1952, [redacted] completed and circulated its study.

25X1C

12. In early August 1952, Mr. [redacted] took the initiative for resuming work on this problem and called a meeting in [redacted] office to review the problem, assess the background data, and determine the next step.

25X1C

25X1A

25X1C

13. On 15 August 1952, Mr. [redacted] of PSB met with SR, PPC, PP and PYD representatives in CIA, and asked if we would take steps to review and prepare a staff study on this problem. This meeting appointed [redacted] as the steering member.

14. In September 1952, the PSB was formally asked to take cognizance of this problem and endorse the development of a paper on this subject, which it did.

15. In October, an Agency ad hoc task force was created with PP, PYD, PPC and SR representatives in accordance with the August meeting and the formal PSB authority of September.

16. On October 30th, the PSB formally approved the terms of reference and general approach for the undertaking of this matter, stipulating 5 elements to be considered. Agencies and departments designated "representatives as points of contact".

25X1C

17. By mid-November, the Agency task force had completed, circulated, and received informal comments and re-drafted a series of papers on this subject known as [redacted]. In addition, it compiled a bibliography.

25X1A

18. A copy was furnished to Mr. [redacted] of PSB and shown to the Defense and State points of contact.

19. At this point, the CIA task force felt it had reached an area of diminishing return until the interim guidance called for in Paragraph 6 (c) of PSB D 2h could be completed. This particular development was

SECRET
Security Information

SECRET
Security Information

under the purview of the State representative.

20. The views of the State representative were formulated, coordinated in State, and distributed (PSB D 24/1) on January 19th to the departments and agencies stipulating that there were 3 courses of action open in the event of a sudden death, and that a plan be developed along the lines of the 3rd alternative.

21. On 6 February, CIA formally concurred in the 3rd alternative, as did Defense.

22. On 27 February, CIA furnished additional views informally to Mr. Comstock, the PSB staff representative, with respect to concepts believed appropriate to the plan (4 points).

23. On 3 March, word was received of the impending death of Stalin and a 7:30 a.m. White House conference transpired. It is our understanding that Mr. [] of PSB did confer with Mr. C. D. Jackson of the White House staff on agreement in Government as to the approach and pattern to follow in this emergency (3rd alternative of PSB D 24/1).

25X1C

25X1C

[]

Chief, SR/1

25X1C

SR/ []

Distribution:

2 - PP/PP

1 - PYD

1 - SR/PPP

2 - SR/1

SECRET
Security Information